Who is entitled?

The Council’s policy is in accordance with the law. The County Council provides home to school transport assistance to children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who attend the nearest school to their home address that meets their needs and resides:

- Two miles or more from that school if the child is under the age of 8.
- Three miles or more over the age of 8 (Year 4 onwards).
- Or where a young person is unable to walk the required distance due to their SEN or mobility needs, even when accompanied by an adult. In these cases, applicants are required to submit evidence to support their request.

Low income policies

Your child might be able to get free home to school transport if your family has a low income. That's if your child is entitled to free school meals or you get the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Primary Schools

Children aged between 8 and 11 who are eligible and living more than 2 miles and less than 3 miles from their nearest suitable school may be able to get free home to school transport.

Secondary Schools

Transport is provided to any one of the 3 nearest qualifying schools between 2 and 6 miles from the home.
What if I prefer a further school?

Transport is provided to the nearest school that can meet a child’s needs, under the criteria on page 2.

The assessment and decision as to the nearest school that can meet a young person’s needs is made by the SEN Team.

The SEN Team’s decision on the nearest school that is able to meet a child’s needs may not always be the one a parent feels is the best school for their child.

Parental Preference
Parents may prefer a different school that is further away than the nearest school that is able to meet the young person’s needs.

However, if parents want that further school named in the young person’s EHCP, they must accept full responsibility for arranging transport and any costs that go with this, and will be required to sign a transport disclaimer.

If this is something that you are considering, it is very important that you take this into account.

What type of transport is provided?

Where an entitlement to transport exists, the County Council will ensure that suitable transport is arranged to enable a young person to access their education and return home at the start and end of the usual school day.

Potential modes of transport

Public transport passes – for young people able to use public transport to get to school. Travel Training can be provided free of charge for students aged 16+.

A seat on a shared vehicle – with other young people traveling to school.

Where there is an available vehicle running to a school and there is space, this will be considered first and where possible the young person will be added. If there are no available vehicles, a new vehicle may be provided and any new applicant allocated a seat on that vehicle.

Mileage allowance – two journeys per day at 45p per mile for parents to take their children to and from school. Parents/carers may be able to apply for this if it is the most cost effective mode of transport.

Free Travel Training – The County Council is committed to promoting and supporting the delivery of independent travel training (ITT), with its partners to enable more young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to gain independent travel training skills, in preparation for and during their transition into Post 16 education and training.

Independent travel training enables young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence.
Is a Passenger Assistant provided?

Passenger Assistants (PA) are not automatically provided. When considering whether a PA is necessary we take account of the following:

- A young person’s medical needs, particularly where rescue medication is required.
- Where an individual young person’s needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle.
- Where a PA is required to help manage the journey and support all passengers on the vehicle. This would, for example, be the case where there are several young people with special educational needs on the vehicle.

The transport operator is required to contact families before travel commences and families can arrange a ‘meet and greet’ to familiarise themselves with the child and parents.

This is your opportunity to discuss the arrangements with the driver and offer advice on any helpful information so that your child can get off to a good start on the vehicle.

Some parents arrange with the driver for their children to take a soft toy or music and headphones to listen to, at the discretion of the operator. This can be a very useful method of enabling children to enjoy their journey to school in cases where they may otherwise have been anxious or nervous.

What if I have concerns about what is happening on the vehicle?

From time to time, a parent or young person may have some concerns over the travel arrangements, this is understandable, especially when travel commences or if there are any changes throughout the year.

Where this is the case, there are a number of ways in which the concerns may be addressed, being:

- Parents should first raise their concerns with the operator directly so that they may work together to resolve any difficulties.
- Where required, operators will look to include the school so that further support can be provided between all of the parties that work with the young person on a daily basis.
- If difficulties persist, the County Council will offer support and consider what reasonable adjustments have been made so far and any further options that can be explored. **New vehicles are not the expected solution under these circumstances.**
Can I make my own arrangements and be paid instead?

Many parents prefer to make their own arrangements to take their child to school rather than have their child travel to school in a contracted vehicle. The County Council will pay mileage reimbursement costs when it is the most cost effective mode of transport. If you want to apply for mileage reimbursement please contact the SEN School transport team via email to schooltransport@hertfordshire.gov.uk

If reimbursement is agreed the County Council pays parents two journeys per day at 45p per mile to take their children to and from school.

For example, where a family resides 10 miles from the school, two journeys, one to school in the morning and one to school in the afternoon is 20 miles:

2 journeys = 20 miles x 45p = £9 per day.

Based on an average term of 65 school days = £585 per term.

Benefits of mileage allowances

• You can take your child directly to school, allowing for significantly shorter journey times in some cases.

• Allows you flexibility to cover before and after school clubs, medical appointments etc, which are not covered by contracted vehicles.

• Your child would not be sharing transport with other children, so the time they leave home in the morning and arrive home in the afternoon would never change, nor would the driver.

Travel Training

The Council has a Travel Training team who work with young people with special educational needs or disabilities to provide them with the confidence and skills to travel on buses and trains. Being able to travel on public transport is a key life skill even after leaving schooling. It assists and encourages people make choices about how they live, go about daily life independently and fulfil their potential into adulthood.

How does it work?

Our team of travel trainers train young people on a one-to-one basis. This is usually on a home to school or college journey.

They will arrange to visit you at home to talk through the training to make sure you and your son/daughter are happy with it.

The trainer will create a training plan for the young person that meets their needs. This will take into account suitable routes.

Initially, the trainer will accompany the young person on their journey, giving encouragement and guidance, until the young person develops the skills to travel on their own. This can be a gradual process at the young person’s own pace.

Sessions usually take place once a week but this can vary. Our trainers work during the school and college holidays.

They will provide regular feedback on their progress so you will always know how things are going.
Boarders

Where children with an EHCP require a residential placement following assessment:

For Termly boarders the County Council will provide assistance for travel to and from home to residential school at the beginning and end of each term and half term.

For 52 week residential placements: the County Council will provide assistance for travel to and from home to a residential school for eight visits throughout the year.

Behaviour

Your child will be expected to conform to reasonable standards of behaviour which allow others to travel safely.

Any bad behaviour which affects the safety of other travellers or the operation of the vehicle will not be tolerated and offenders may have their travel facility removed.

If the travel facility is removed the parent/carer will be responsible for getting their child to and from school/college at their own expense.

Please see the Pupil Behaviour Guide available at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport

What can I do if I am not entitled?

Where there is no entitlement to transport under the law or County Council Home to School Transport policy, parents are responsible for arranging for their child to get to school.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of the County Council to facilitate any arrangements, you may wish to consider:

- Walking or driving your child to school.
- Accompanying your child on public transport.
- Arranging Travel Training so that they may travel to school independently.
- Contacting any local school contractors to explore whether you are able to make a private arrangement for your child to travel in the vehicle (i.e. spare seat).
- Car share with another family.
- Arrange for a friend or family member to take your child to school, paying their fuel expenses if appropriate.